

Appl. No. 09/981,789
Amdt. Dated July 2, 2003
Reply to Office action of April 2, 2003
Attorney Docket No. P13685/000500-319
EUS/J/P/03-1051

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached drawing sheets are proposed replacement sheets containing Figures 1 and 6, and a proposed replacement for Figure 8.

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1.) Amendments

a.) Specification

The Applicants have amended the Specification to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner.

b.) Claims

The Applicants have amended Claims 1, 5, 6, 9, 14 and 16, and cancelled Claims 2-4, 8 and 18-24. Accordingly, Claims 1, 5-7 and 9-17 remain pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

c.) Drawings

The Applicants submit herewith a proposed drawing correction for Figure 8 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. Also, the Applicants submit herewith a proposed drawing correction for Figures 1 and 6, deleting certain reference numerals designating portions of those figures that do not require a description in order for those skilled in the art to make and use the invention.

2.) Examiner Objections

a.) Specification

The Examiner objected to the specification as containing certain informalities. Amendments to the specification are submitted herewith in conformance to the Examiner's recommended corrections.

b.) Claims – Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action did not include an express rejection or objection to Claims 2, 10-13, 15, 17, 19, 21 or 23. In a telephone call on July 1, 2003, however, the Examiner stated that those claims were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to

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include the allowable subject matter of Claim 2. Accordingly, Claim 1 is now allowable.

c.) Miscellaneous Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to Claims 1, 5, 9, 14, 16, 18, 20 , 22 and 24 on either no stated ground or, under 37 C.F.R. 1.75(c), as being of "improper dependent form." The Applicants have amended Claims 1, 5, 9, 14, 16 and 18 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions, and have cancelled Claims 18, 20, 22, and 24. Accordingly, the Applicants now believe all remaining claims objected to by the Examiner are allowable.

3.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected Claims "3-6, 8 and 18-21," under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.¹ The Applicants have cancelled Claims 3, 4, 8 and 18-21 and, thus, the Examiner's rejection thereof is moot. The Applicants have amended Claim 6 to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention; the Applicants direct the Examiner's attention to Figure 7 for a better understanding of what is claimed by Claim 6. The Applicants now believe all remaining claims rejected by the Examiner under §112 are allowable.

4.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 7 and 24, under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ahlberg. Claim 24 has been cancelled and, thus, the Examiner's rejection thereof is moot.

The Examiner objected to Claim 2 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim (i.e., Claim 1), but that it would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly,

¹ The Examiner only provided specific rejections under §112 of Claims 3-4, 6, 8 and 18-20; i.e., no specific rejections were provided for Claims 5 and 21.

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the Applicants have amended Claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of Claim 2. Therefore, Claim 1 is now allowable. Furthermore, whereas Claims 7 is dependent from Claim 1, and includes the limitations thereof, Claim 7 is also allowable. The Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of Claims 1 and 7.

5.) Prior Art Not Relied Upon

The Examiner stated that certain prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to Applicants' invention. The Applicants do not believe the art made of record renders the Applicants' claimed invention unpatentable, but reserve the right to submit arguments against any express rejection or objection the Examiner may later elect to enter.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicants believe all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for Claims 1, 5-7 and 9-17.

The Applicants request a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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